



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By: Maj. Guy Hayes

National Guard, Reserves Support Arctic Care in Rural Alaska

CAMP DENALI, Alaska— The Alaska National Guard is joining forces with active-duty and reserve units across the country to provide support for Operation Arctic Care April 15-30.

Led this year by the Army Reserves 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support), Arctic Care is an annual two-week mission where more than 300 government and military medical professionals and specialists from across the country converge on different remote villages across Alaska.

This year's operation marks the 17th year medical teams have deployed to remote areas of Alaska to treat general health patients, in addition to providing dental care, eye exams and veterinary care.

With most villages only accessible by airplane or helicopter, the teams and supplies are airlifted by Alaska National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, C-23 Sherpas and C-130 Hercules aircraft.

Medical professionals will provide care to native Alaskans in remote villages, from Galena to Northway to Anaktuvuk Pass, who do not have access to routine health care.

The operation provides excellent health care to some of America's most remote citizens and has become the largest recurring joint military medical and logistics training exercise of its kind, providing real-world humanitarian assistance and medical care.

"Arctic Care is a phenomenal operation that synchronizes support between multiple agencies while providing excellent support to rural Alaska," said Maj. Gen Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general, Alaska National Guard.

Austere weather conditions are also a challenge in getting flights into villages, but that's part of the mission, which is intended to simulate military/civilian medical outreach operations in time of crisis, conflict or disaster.

"It's an excellent opportunity to train, while providing real-world support here at home," Katkus said. "This training is critical for our Guard and Reserve members so they are prepared for emergencies here in Alaska and deployments around the world."

Operation Arctic Care is sponsored by the Innovative Readiness Training program under the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. The Alaska National Guard will be the lead agency for Arctic Care 2012.

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Cutlines:

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An Alaska Air National Guard loadmaster from the 144th Airlift Squadron guides supplies onto a C-130 for Operation Arctic Care 2011. The supplies were destined for a forward logistics base in Galena, Alaska, and will assist medical professionals in providing medical, dental, optometric and veterinary care to Alaskans in remote villages. Photo by Lt. Col. Brent Campbell, 807th MDSC Public Affairs

DSC3343

An Alaska Army National Guard crew chief from A Company, 1-207th Aviation Battalion, maintains watch during a resupply mission in support of Arctic Care 2011. Photo by Sgt. Craig Anderson, 807th MDSC Public Affairs

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North of the Brooks Range, Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska, is the furthest northern town visited by the Arctic Care 2011 team. The 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) is this year's lead component of Arctic Care, providing health care services to the residents of the Alaska village. Photo by Lt. Col. Brent Campbell, 807th MDSC Public Affairs

DSC1991

Anaktuvuk Pass residents help 807th MDSC Soldiers unload medical and dental supplies from an Alaska Army National Guard C-23 Sherpa. Photo by Lt. Col. Brent Campbell, 807th MDSC Public Affairs